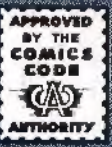




CHALLENGERS



MAY
NO. 73

OF THE

LINKNOWN

15c
#329

I HEAR YOU...
I FEEL YOU...
WHATEVER YOU ARE,

STAY OUT OF
THIS ROOM!



"CURSE OF THE KILLER TIME FORGOT!"

CONTROL CENTER, CAPE KENNEDY
-- NERVE CENTER OF THE
NATION'S SPACE EFFORT...

GENERAL... GENERAL!
THE CAPSULE'S OUT
OF CONTROL--!

CAN YOU TELL WHERE
IT'LL HIT?



SOMEPLACE
NEAR THE
CAPE!

CALL THE
CARRIER
"CHAMPLAIN"
...HAVE THEM
GET CHOPPERS
THERE-- FAST!



AND MILES AWAY, A
MANNED SPACE CAPSULE
PLUMMETS TOWARD THE
WAITING WATER...



... AND CRASHES WITH BONE-
CRUSHING FORCE! ALMOST
IMMEDIATELY, RESCUE HELI-
COPTERS CONVERGE ON THE
SPOT LIKE A FLIGHT OF
MOTHER PIGEONS LOOKING FOR
THEIR BROOD...



THE BATTERED CRAFT IS LIFTED FROM
THE OCEAN AND, WITHIN BARE MINUTES,
DEPOSITED GENTLY ON THE FLIGHT
DECK OF A MIGHTY AIRCRAFT CARRIER!



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GET THE DOCTOR
ON DECK!

NO USE! HE'S *BEYOND*
MEDICAL HELP! HE'S
BEEN... *STRANGLER!*

STRANGLER?
BUT... *HOW?*
HE WAS *ALONE*
...SEALED IN THE
SHIP... *10,000*
MILES FROM
EARTH!

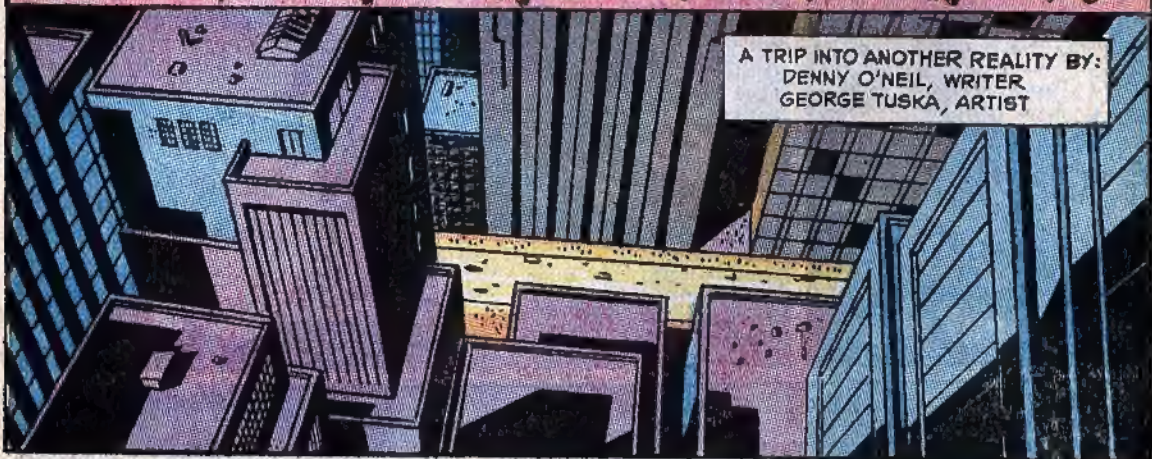


I DON'T KNOW! I *DO* KNOW
THIS, HOWEVER... *WHATEVER*
HAPPENED UP THERE WASN'T
NATURAL...

...AND THAT
MEANS THERE'S
ONLY *ONE* THING
TO DO... *CALL*
THE CHALLENGERS!

AN IMPOSSIBLE MURDER... THE BEGINNING OF A BIZARRE TANGLE OF EVENTS THAT WILL LEAD THE *CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN* TO THEIR MOST UNUSUAL-- THEIR MOST FEARSOME-- FOE... AND REVEAL A SPECIAL KIND OF EVIL! PAUSE NOW, AND CONTEMPLATE THE ENORMITY OF THE UNIVERSE... PONDER HOW *LITTLE* MAN KNOWS... AND PREPARE TO MEET

The CURSE of the KILLER TIME FORGOT!



A TRIP INTO ANOTHER REALITY BY:
DENNY O'NEIL, WRITER
GEORGE TUSKA, ARTIST



MANHATTAN AT DUSK... A TEEMING HIVE OF SCURRYING HUMANITY... AND ABOVE IT ALL, IN THE LAVISH PENTHOUSE APARTMENT OF ACE MORGAN...

...THE
CHALLENGERS
RELAX!

WHERE'D YA
SAY ACE IS?

OUR LEADER-MAN'S OFF TESTIN'
ANOTHER DUMB AIRPLANE! HE
SHOULDA BEEN
BORN A BIRD!

ACE IS IN LOVE WITH
DANGER-- EXACTLY
AS YOU ARE!



HEY, *THERE'S* A BRIGHT REMARK! WHERE'D YOU GET IT-- FROM A BUBBLE-GUM WRAPPER?

PLEASE, RED... I ONLY MEANT--

KNOCK OFF THE SQUABBLIN! WILL YA? WE GOT COMPANY!

COME IN, WHOEVER YA ARE!



GREETINGS, GROUP!

PROF! PROF!

WHEN'D YA GET OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, BIG BRAIN? WE THOUGHT YA'D BE THERE ANOTHER MONTH!*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: PROF. HALEY SUFFERED NEAR-FATAL INJURIES AT THE HANDS OF CORINNA'S FATHER, THE LATE ALGERNON STARK. HE WAS HOSPITALIZED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS!



THE MEDICOS RELEASED ME EARLY, AFTER I SOLEMNLY PROMISED TO TAKE LIFE EASY!

AN' WE'RE GONNA SEE THAT YA *KEEP* YER PROMISE!

HERE, LEMME HELP YOU INTO A CHAIR!



IT'S GOOD TO SEE YA UP AN' ABOUT AGAIN, PROF! I MEAN IT!

THAT GOES *DOUBLE* FOR ME... MAYBE *TRIPLE*!

I NOTICE OUR *LADY* FRIEND AIN'T SAYING MUCH! MAYBE THAT'S 'CAUSE SHE KNOWS WE DON'T *NEED* HER ANY MORE!







HELLO,
ACE!

HI, PROF!
GOOD TO
SEE YOU...

...AND BAD TO SEE
THESE NITWITS! YOU'RE
BEHAVING LIKE KIDS
AGAIN!

SORRY,
LEADER!

ME,
TOO!



SAVE THE CONTRITION! WE HAVE A JOB
TO DO! THE AIR FORCE IS HOLDING A
JET FOR US--DESTINATION, CAPE
KENNEDY!

IS CORINNA
GOING, TOO?

WHY **SHOULDN'T** SHE?
WE'LL NEED ALL THE
HELP WE CAN GET!

GET INTO YOUR
CHALLENGER
TOGS--AND
LET'S MOVE!



...WITHIN AN HOUR, THE **CHALLENGERS**
ARE STREAKING SOUTH...



... AND WITHIN **TWO**
HOURS, THEY HAVE
BEEN BRIEFED ON THE
MYSTERIOUS KILLING/
THEN...

IF YOU GENTLEMEN HAVE
NO FURTHER QUESTIONS,
I'LL TURN YOU OVER
TO MAJOR CHEEVER!

HEY--! ARE YOU
THE MAJOR
CHEEVER...

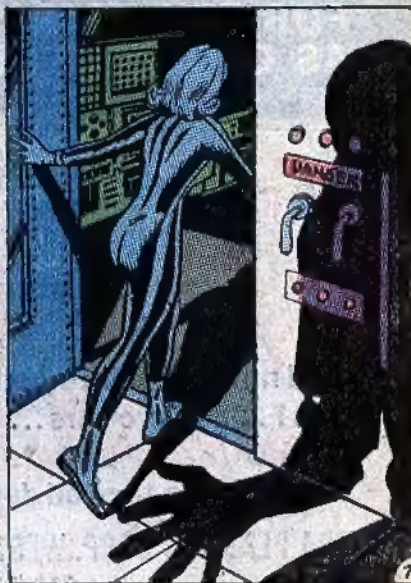
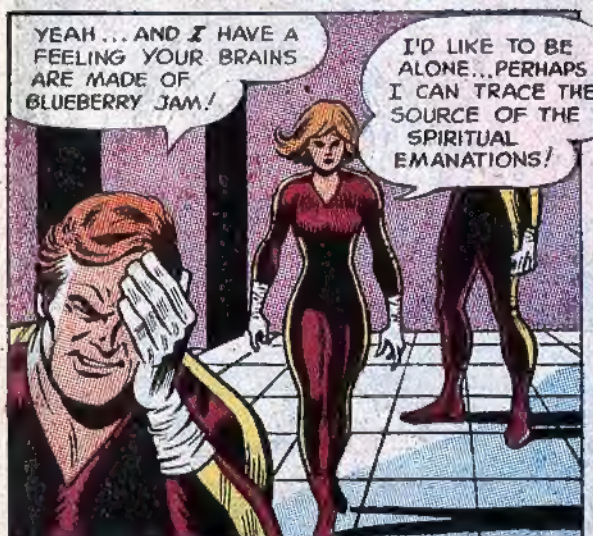
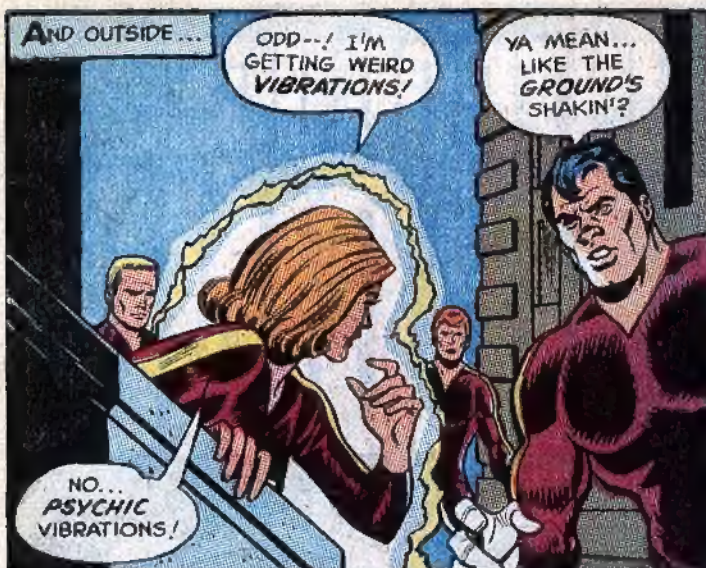
... ONE OF THE
GUYS WHO FLEW
A MOON MISSION?

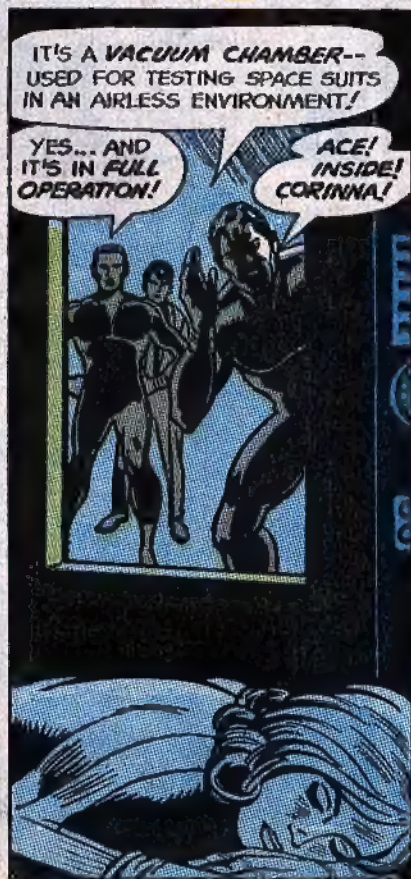
NOT EXACTLY!
I NEVER TOUCHED THE
LUNAR SURFACE--
MERELY TOOK A
SHIP HALF-WAY!

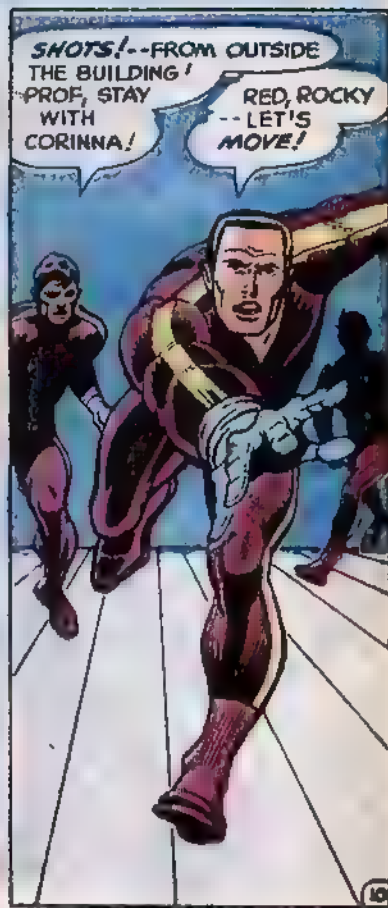
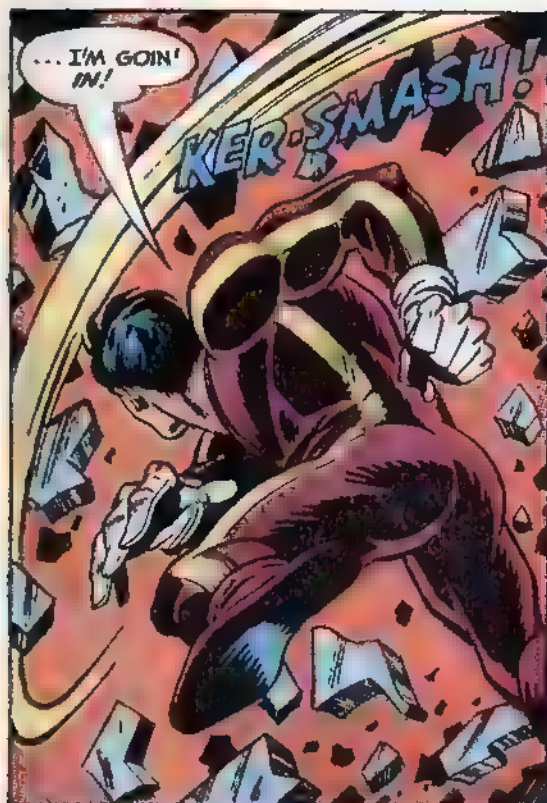
THAT'S GOOD
ENOUGH
FOR US!

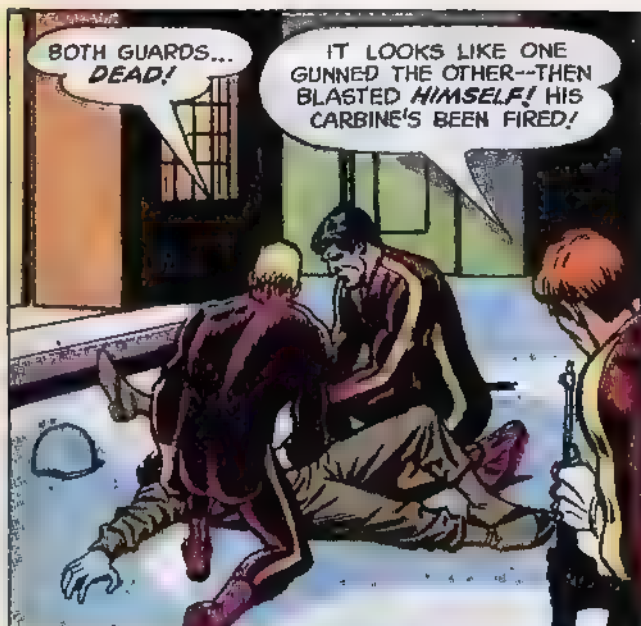
A REMARKABLE
ACHIEVEMENT!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.









BOTH GUARDS...
DEAD!

IT LOOKS LIKE ONE
GUNNED THE OTHER--THEN
BLASTED **HIMSELF!** HIS
CARBINE'S BEEN FIRED!

NOT A CHANCE! HE WAS SHOT IN THE
BACK! MAYBE SOMEONE WANTED IT
TO LOOK LIKE THAT...

... SOMEONE IN TOO MUCH OF A
HURRY TO DO A GOOD JOB! LET'S
GET BACK TO CORINNA! SHE
MIGHT BE ABLE TO SHED SOME
LIGHT ON THIS!



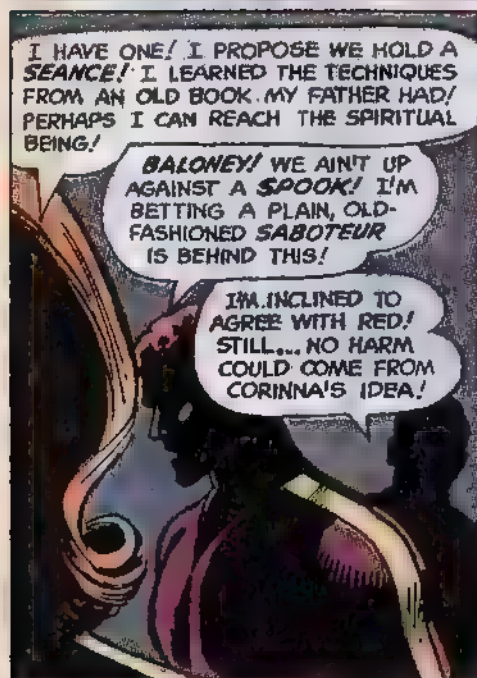
BUT SHE **CAN'T...** FOR AFTER
SHE TELLS HER STORY...

SO YOU DON'T
KNOW WHO TRIED
TO KILL YOU?

I COULDN'T
SEE HIS
FACE!

WHAT'S NEXT,
LEADER-MAN?

I WISH
I KNEW!
ANYBODY
GOT A
SUGGESTION?



I HAVE ONE! I PROPOSE WE HOLD A
SEANCE! I LEARNED THE TECHNIQUES
FROM AN OLD BOOK MY FATHER HAD!
PERHAPS I CAN REACH THE SPIRITUAL
BEING!

BALONEY! WE AIN'T UP
AGAINST A **SPOOK!** I'M
BETTING A PLAIN, OLD-
FASHIONED **SABOTEUR**
IS BEHIND THIS!

I'M INCLINED TO
AGREE WITH RED!
STILL... NO HARM
COULD COME FROM
CORINNA'S IDEA!



SO, LATER THAT EVENING, IN ACE'S HOTEL ROOM...

I ASK EVERYONE TO REMAIN PERFECTLY
STILL! MAKE YOUR MINDS BLANK...
FOCUS YOUR WILLS ON ME!

HEAR US...COME TO US...
LET US KNOW YOU ARE
PRESENT!



GIVE US A SIGN...

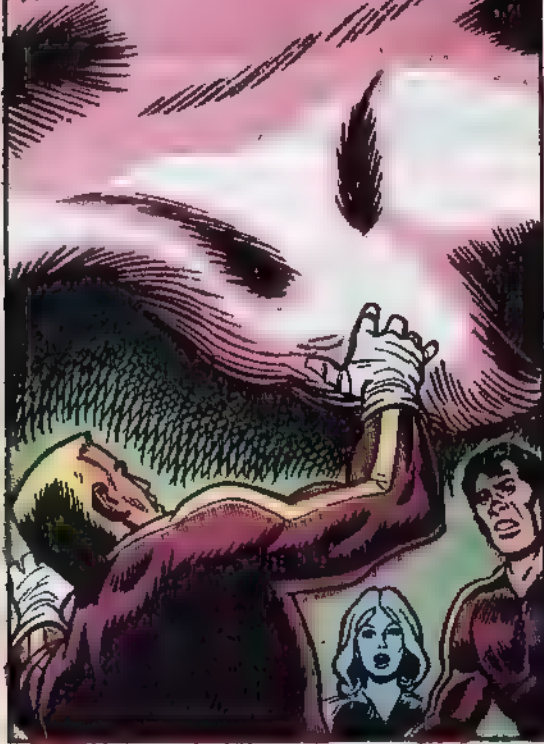
THUMP THUMP



WE HEAR YOU! ARE YOU *HUMAN*?
CAN YOU *SPEAK* TO US?

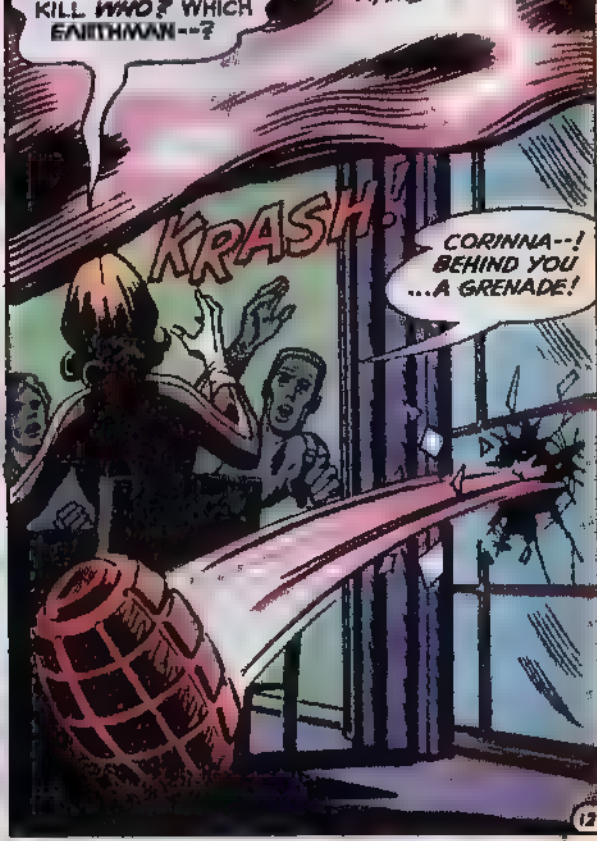


NOT HUMAN...CURSED...LINKED TO
EARTHMAN...MUST KILL ONCE MORE...

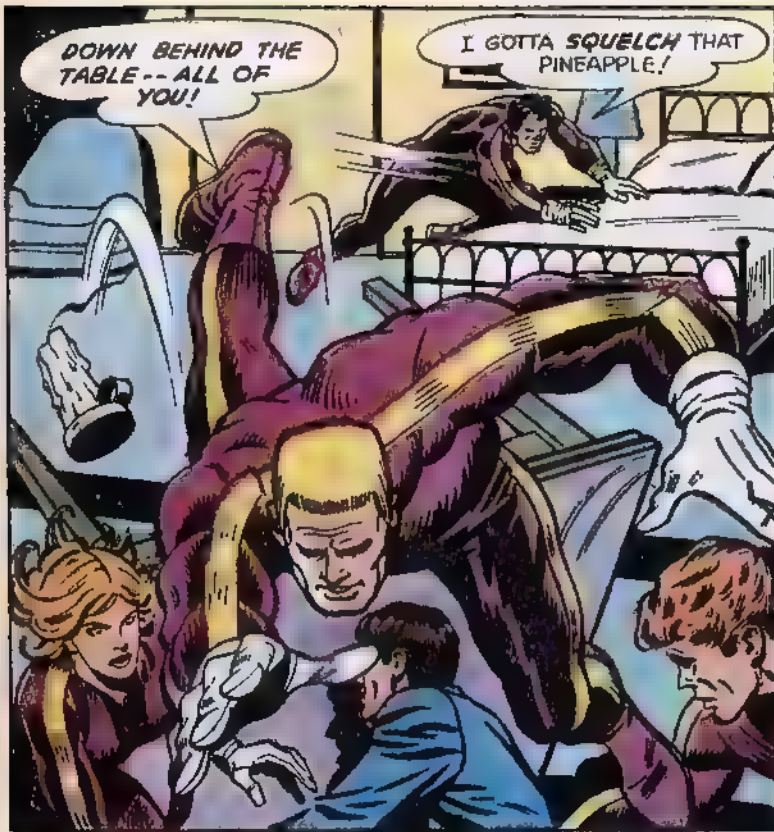


KILL WHO? WHICH
EARTHMAN--?

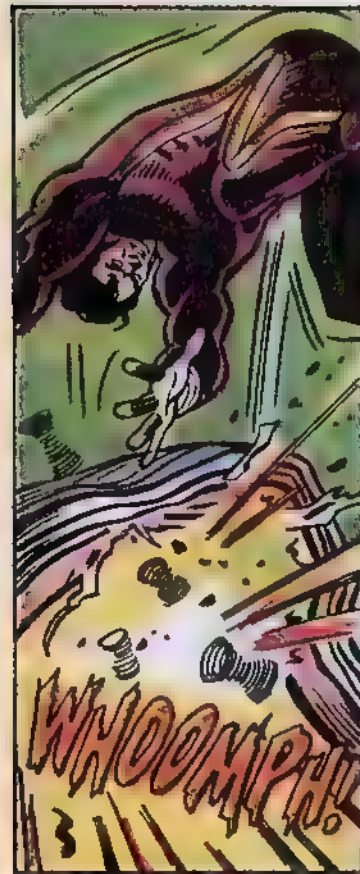
NAME IS...



CORINNA--!
BEHIND YOU
...A GRENADE!



I GOTTA **SQUELCH** THAT PINEAPPLE!



NICE GOIN', ROCK!

ARE YOU INJURED?

NAW... TAKES MORE THAN A LOUSY HAND GRENADE TO DO IN A LUNK LIKE ME!



WHOEVER TOSSED IT IS LONG GONE!

NO... THE BEING **FLED!** BUT I CAUGHT A SENSE OF THE **DIRECTION** HE-- OR IT-- WENT!

CORINNA... IS THERE ANY CHANCE OF CONTINUING THE SEANCE?

WELL... SPIT IT OUT! **WHERE?**





STRAIGHT UP... INTO SPACE... TOWARD THE MOON!



IF YOU'RE CERTAIN--

- THEN THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING, TOO! THERE'S A LAUNCH SCHEDULED FOR EIGHT TOMORROW--

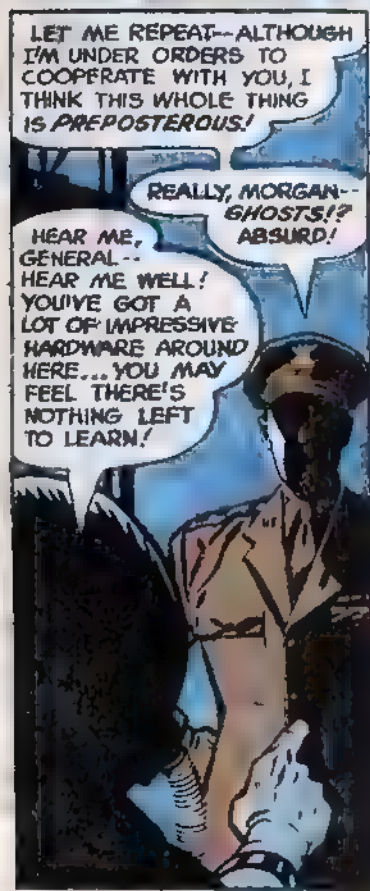
--WE'RE GOING TO BE ON IT!



I'M SORRY YOU TWO HAVE TO STAY BEHIND!

WE HAVE NO PRESSURE SUIT LARGE ENOUGH FOR ROCKY! AND THE MEDICS SAY HALEY IS IN NO CONDITION FOR ROCKET FLIGHT!

AS IT IS, WE'RE GONNA BE CRAMMED INTO THAT LITTLE CAPSULE!



LET ME REPEAT--ALTHOUGH I'M UNDER ORDERS TO COOPERATE WITH YOU, I THINK THIS WHOLE THING IS PREPOSTEROUS!

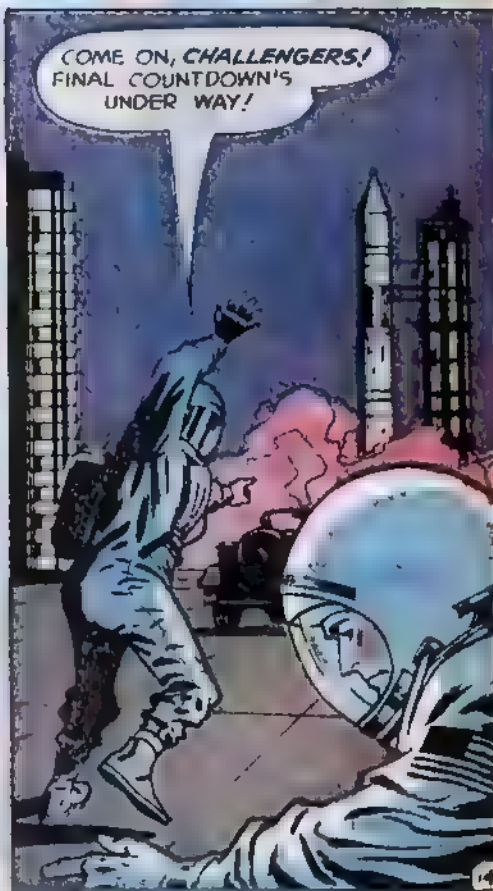
REALLY, MORGAN-- GHOSTS!? ABSURD!

HEAR ME, GENERAL-- HEAR ME WELL! YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF IMPRESSIVE HARDWARE AROUND HERE... YOU MAY FEEL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO LEARN!

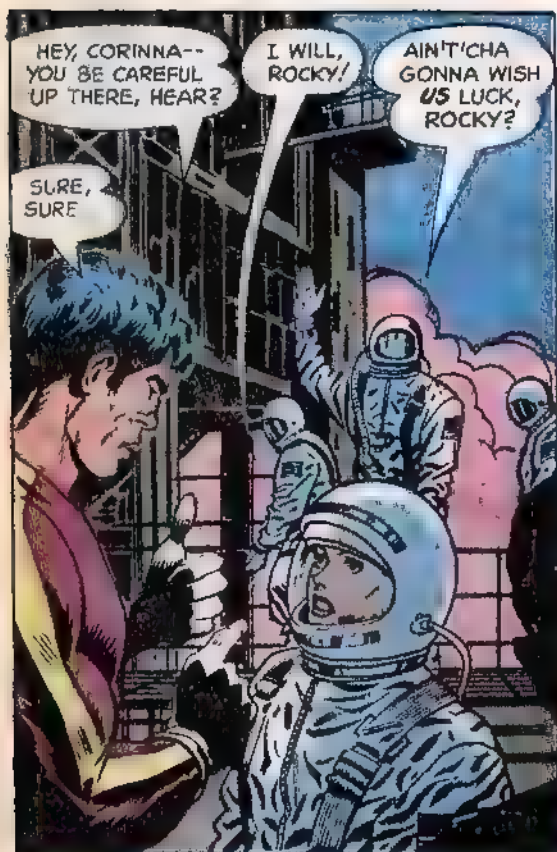


WELL, MISTER, THE HARDWARE'S ONLY THE BEGINNING-- ONLY A TOOL! THE UNIVERSE IS A BIG, MYSTERIOUS PLACE...

...AND WE'VE ONLY BEGUN TO FIND OUT WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

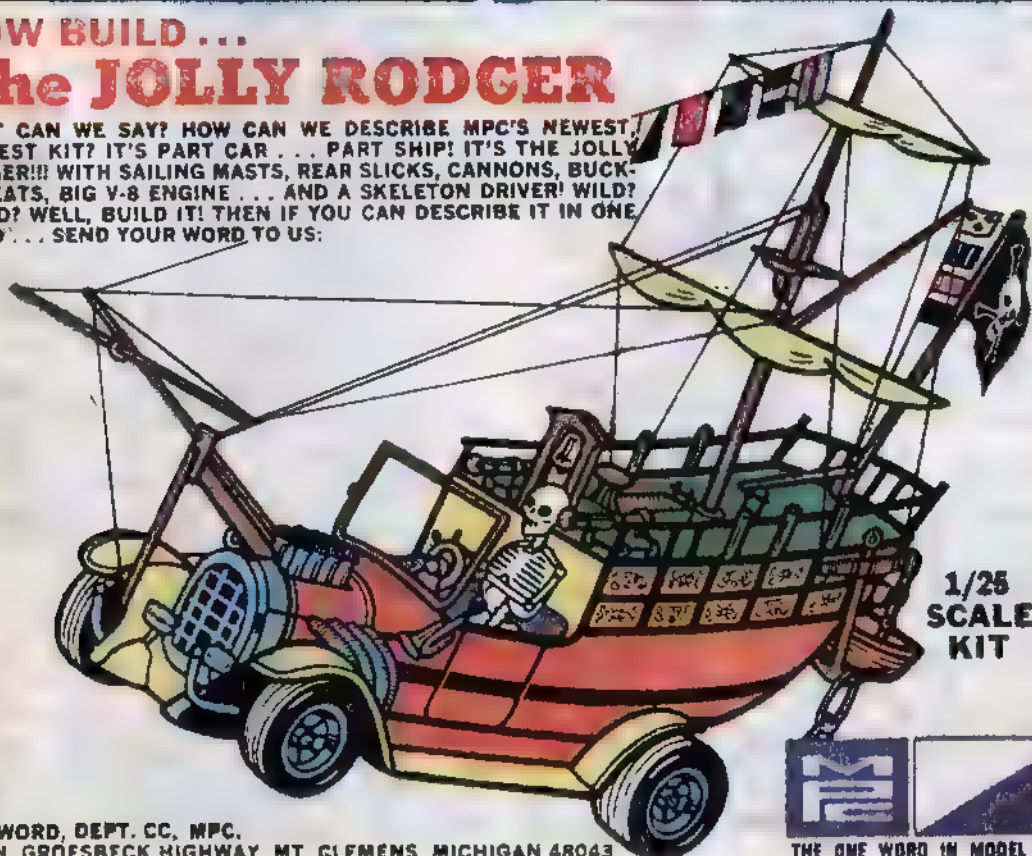


COME ON, CHALLENGERS! FINAL COUNTDOWN'S UNDER WAY!



NOW BUILD... The JOLLY RODGER

WHAT CAN WE SAY? HOW CAN WE DESCRIBE MPC'S NEWEST, WILDEST KIT? IT'S PART CAR... PART SHIP! IT'S THE JOLLY RODGER!!! WITH SAILING MASTS, REAR SLICKS, CANNONS, BUCKET SEATS, BIG V-8 ENGINE... AND A SKELETON DRIVER! WILD? WEIRD? WELL, BUILD IT! THEN IF YOU CAN DESCRIBE IT IN ONE WORD... SEND YOUR WORD TO US:



ONE WORD, DEPT. CC, MPC.
126 N. GROESBECK HIGHWAY, MT. CLEMENS, MICHIGAN 48043



THE ONE WORD IN MODEL KITS

LET'S CHAT WITH THE CHALLS

Address all mail to:
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
 National Periodicals
 909 Third Avenue
 New York, N.Y. 10022

B-530



EDITOR'S NOTE: Ever since Bob Brown's assignment was switched to "Superboy" and "Detective Comics," we've been fishing around for a suitable replacement. And Bob's substitute is no easy person to come by as demonstrated in the past few issues. While Jack Sparling and Dick Dillin are ingenious craftsmen when they're doing their own thing, their bag—if you'll forgive us for keeping this in a groovy vein—is not the CHALLENGERS.

After long last, however, we think we've located our man in George Tuska. Tuska's been around for some time, and he's got as many comics credits as anyone in the business, ranging from a syndicated strip to full books of his own. Some years ago, George was one of the most prized artists in our bullpen when he was lured away by a canny competitor. When Gentleman George returned not too long ago, asking forgiveness, we were quick to welcome him back instead. His imagination was matched only by his versatility. After a couple of short test stories, which do and will appear in "Unexpected," he earned the right to his own mag, and here he is.

We asked George—tall, dignified, with locks of white hair framing his leonine face—for a few paragraphs about himself in order to introduce him to you. Here is what he gave us:

Born in Hartford, Conn., lived on a farm...at the age of 8 was in a hospital for appendicitis when an elderly patient showed me how to draw...was fascinated...that was my inspiration...after graduation from school, came to New York to enroll at National Academy of Design...my ambition: to become a scenic painter and illustrator...while at the Academy, landed a job in comics...it was another inspiration...When I finished school, I devoted all my time to my new job...Have been living on Long Island for 16 years with wife Dorothy; Barbara, who recently married; Katherine, 15, and Robert, 12, a severe art critic...In spare time, I paint and/or play golf with other cartoonists...Now that I've rejoined National, I'm back with a lot of friends, and I'm out to show 'em all I can.

We think he will!

Dear Editor:

I always considered CHALLENGERS one of the best magazines. Now, with the addition of Corinna Stark and the impending love affair and feud, it's even better. Like it or not, it's about time some women invaded the lives of the Challengers. I hope Corinna

stays and marries Red. Yes, marries him! Why not?

B.J. Reed, Ventura, Calif.

Not if Rocky has anything to say about it, B.J., but then, that's what stories are made of. At any rate, Corinna has kicked up a storm. When scripter Denny O'Neil and Ye Ed decided to drop a female into the very masculine lives of our boys, we never thought it would trigger the reaction that it has.

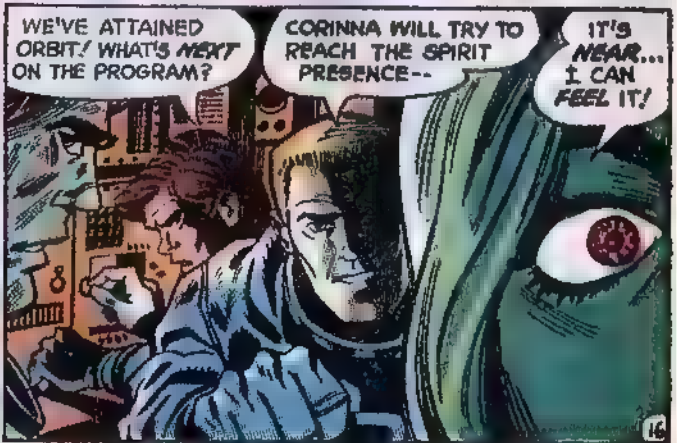
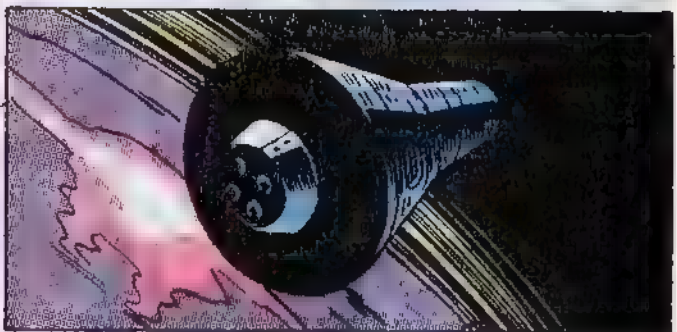
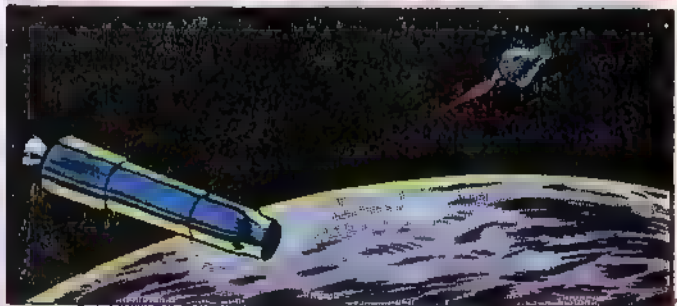
Seems everybody's glad to have a groovy chick like her aboard, and among those who scrawled especially emotional epistles were Sean Cook of Eldorado, Kan.; Jan Boll, Grand Haven, Mich.; Greg Hendricks, Detroit, Mich.; Charles Urstadt, Bronxville, N.Y.; Ricky Gibson, Brunswick, Ohio; Darlene Dachstein, of Excelsior Springs, Mo. There was only one—count him, one!—dissenter in the lot. Jerry Wilson of Omaha, Neb., couldn't care less about our girl. Many of them prompted the notion that Corinna become a fifth Challenger. But we shall see...we shall see.—Ed.

CHALLS CHIT-CHAT: "Whatever happened to Mail Chute Chit-Chat?" asks Steve Foster from Worcester, Mass. "How come no subscriptions? I wouldn't mind paying more so long as I was assured of getting the magazine. What was the name of the movie written by Arnold Drake, who used to write the CHALLENGERS? (What happened to Chit-Chat? Here it is, Steve, and we only use it to capsule comments which aren't worthy of additional space. Subscriptions? They may be back. We use that word advisedly. Watch for announcements here and in other DC mags! Arnie's movie was called "Who Killed Teddy Bear?"—Ed.)

"Who Am I?" was a short masterpiece. Who wrote and who drew it?" asks Sean Cook. (That appeared in #71 when our advertising schedule was light and two additional pages of editorial material were needed to complete the book. We keep a few of those filler stories on hand for just such emergencies. This particular shortie drew an unusual amount of mail, a fact that pleased us no end, not because Nick Cardy did such an exciting job of illustrating but because it was written by Ye Ed himself.—Ed.)

"When Evil Calls" in #71 should win an Alley Award," states Gregory Kent, Goleta, Calif. (We agree! —Ed.) ...The inimitable inker of Sparling's set of pencils for #71 asked us to refrain from using his name among the credits. Any of you knowledgeable natives out there in fan-land care to hazard a guess? Go ahead, we double-dare ya!—Ed.

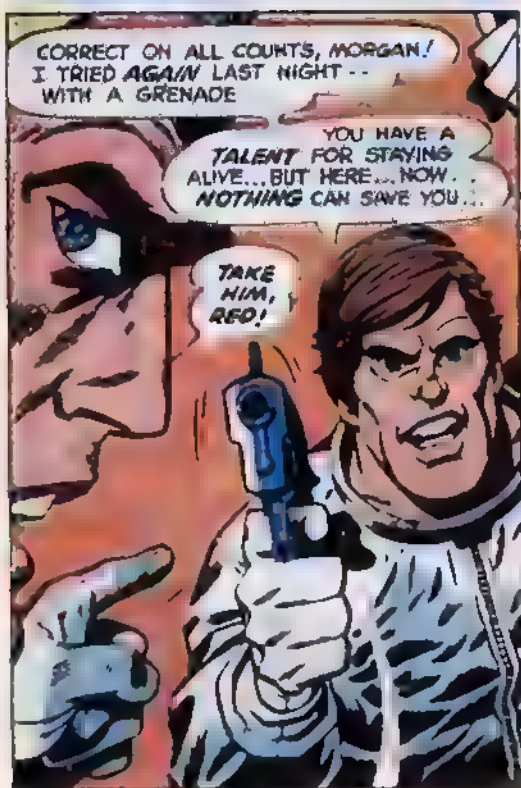
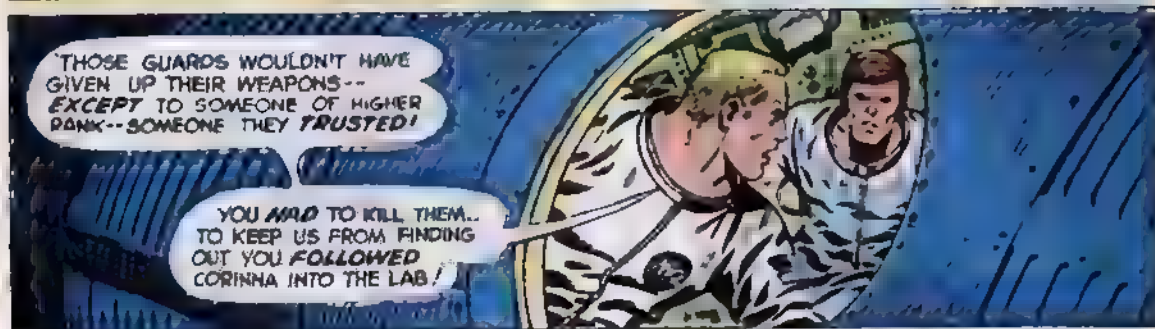
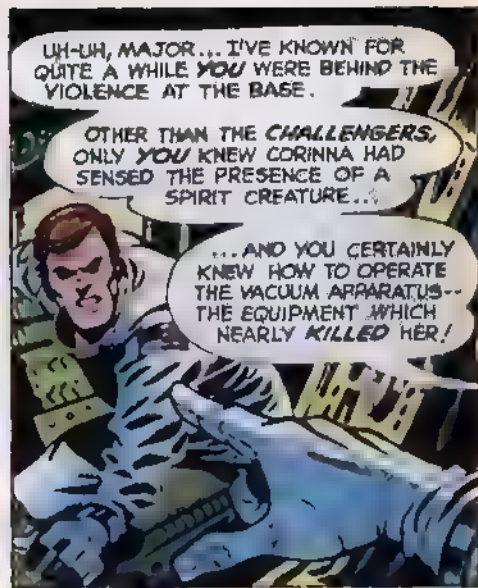
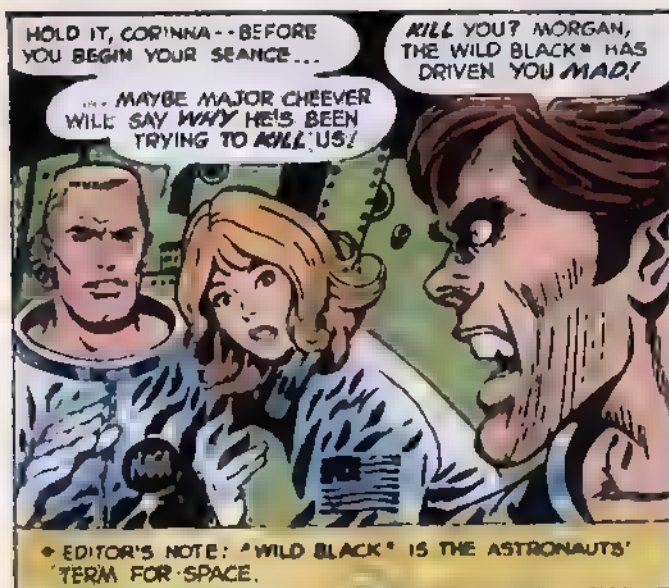
A HUSH FALLS OVER THE HUGE FIELD, BROKEN ONLY BY THE INHUMAN ECHO OF THE LOUDSPEAKERS TICKING OFF SECONDS... THEN A ROAR LIKE THE CRY OF AN ANGRY GOD BOOMS FORTH... FIRE GUSHES... THE SHIP LEAPS HUNGRILY AT THE SKY.



WE'VE ATTAINED ORBIT! WHAT'S NEXT ON THE PROGRAM?

CORINNA WILL TRY TO REACH THE SPIRIT PRESENCE--

IT'S NEAR... I CAN FEEL IT!



CONSOLE YOURSELF MORGAN ...
YOU'LL BE A **PIONEER**...
THE FIRST MAN SHOT TO
DEATH IN SPACE!

ACE... OVER HIS
SHOULDER! IT'S
COMING IN!

THE THING YOU MATERIALIZED
AT THE SEANCE...

YES! CHALLENGERS!
MEET-- MACHU!

WHAT
IS IT--?

AM CREATURE FROM FAR COSMOS.
CREATURE OF PURE ENERGY.
MANY EONS AGO ME AND
FELLOWS JOURNEED TO
YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM...

WE SETTLED ON YOUR MOON
MY TASK WAS TO SEEK OUT
AND DESTROY CERTAIN
SUBSTANCES WHICH DRAIN
OUR LIFE-FORCE...

I FAILED... ALL BUT MYSELF
PERISHED... OUR LEADER WAS
ENCHANTED... MUCH MAGIC IN
HIM...

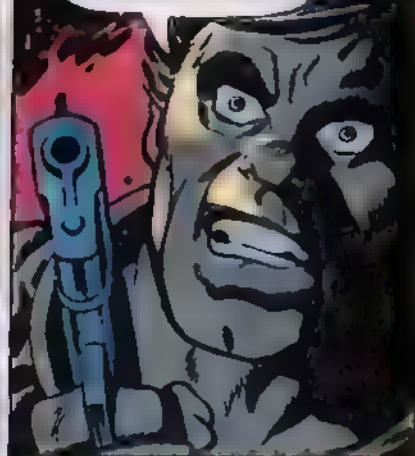
...WITH LAST STRENGTH
HE CURSED ME... DOOMED
ME TO STAY HERE UNTIL
I MADE AMENDS... BY
DESTROYING TWO THINGS
OF EVIL...

...WANDERED ALONE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS...UNTIL THIS EARTHLING CHEEVER CAME WITHIN MY KEN...



HE RELATED HIS STORY AND I TOLD HIM WHO TO DESTROY--

--ANYONE WHO SEEKS TO PUT MAN BEYOND HIS OWN PLANET!



WHY? YOU'RE A SPACEMAN YOURSELF!

I BECAME ONE BEFORE I REALIZED THERE WERE...THINGS... LIKE MACHU LURKING IN THE WILD-BLACK...

...THINGS SO ALIEN TO US, THEY'LL CORRUPT US--!

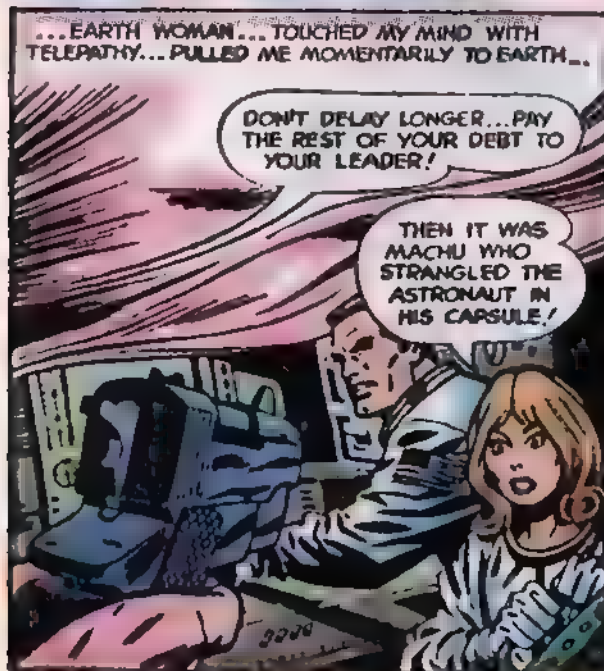
POOR MAN... ENCOUNTERING THE UNKNOWN HAS UNBALANCED HIS MIND!



...EARTH WOMAN... TOUCHED MY MIND WITH TELEPATHY... PULLED ME MOMENTARILY TO EARTH...

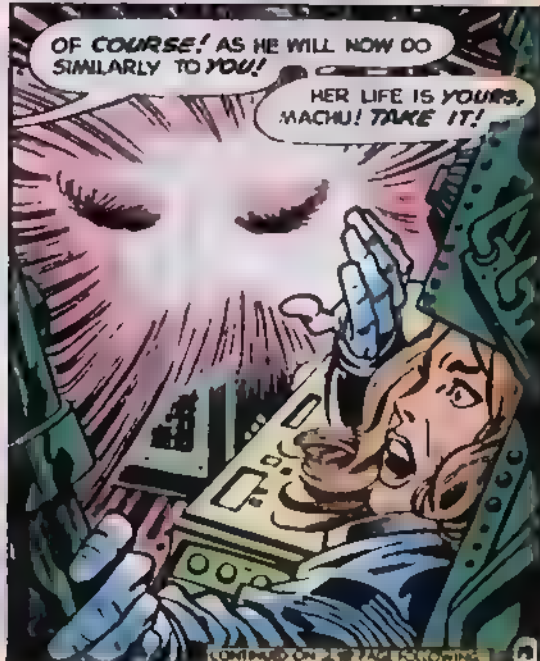
DON'T DELAY LONGER...PAY THE REST OF YOUR DEBT TO YOUR LEADER!

THEN IT WAS MACHU WHO STRANGLING THE ASTRONAUT IN HIS CARSULE!



OF COURSE! AS HE WILL NOW DO SIMILARLY TO YOU!

HER LIFE IS YOURS, MACHU! TAKE IT!



CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



...YOURS WAS THE FIRST HUMAN MIND I FOUND... I BELIEVED YOU, FOR I KNEW NO BETTER... NOW I HAVE GLIMPSED THE FEMALE'S THOUGHTS... I FIND HER PSYCHE CLEAN AND PURE... AND YOURS FILLED WITH EVIL...

SO, YOU DISOBEY? THEN I'LL DO THE JOB PERSONALLY!

RELEASE YOUR WEAPON!

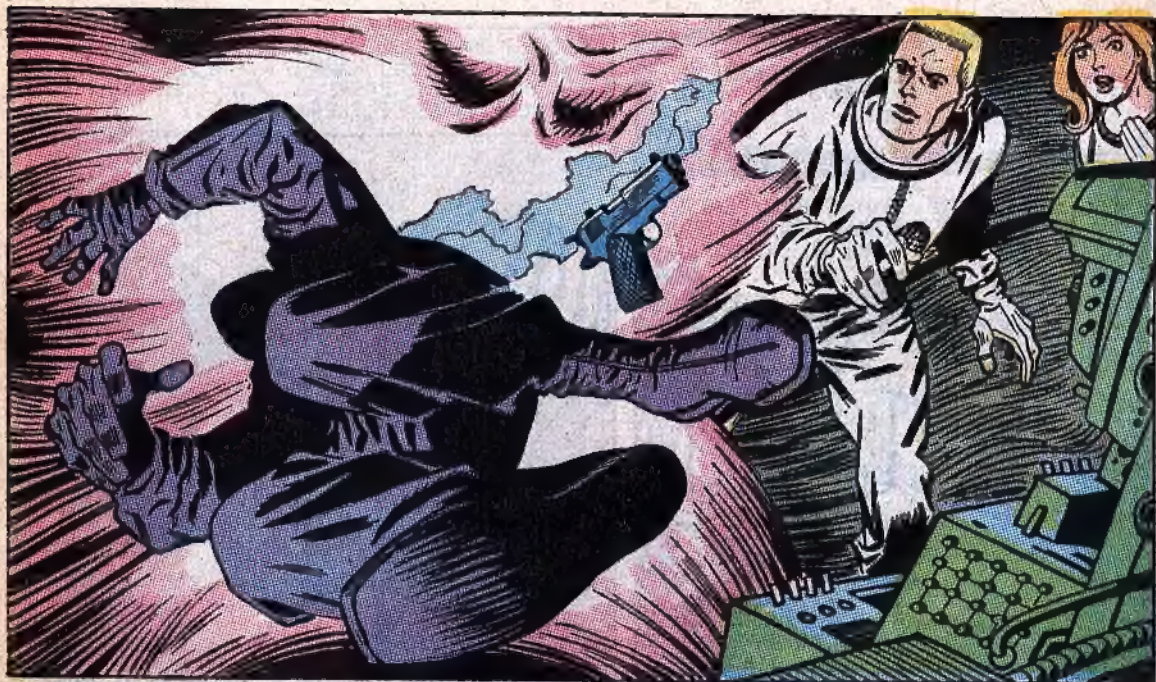
STAY AWAY... GET BACK!

UHHH--

AGHHHH!

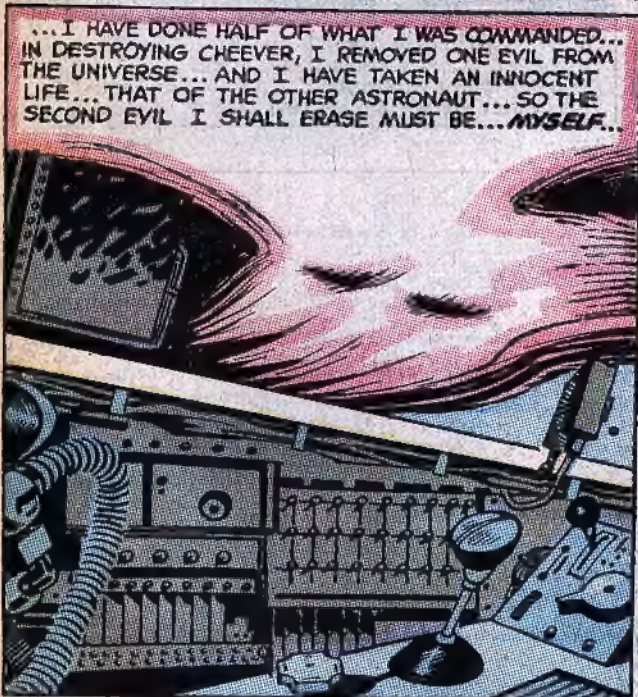
BLAM!

CONTINUED ON 288 PAGE FOLLOWING



IT IS DONE...
I GO...

WHERE?
WHAT WILL
BECOME
OF YOU?



...I HAVE DONE HALF OF WHAT I WAS COMMANDED...
IN DESTROYING CHEEVER, I REMOVED ONE EVIL FROM
THE UNIVERSE... AND I HAVE TAKEN AN INNOCENT
LIFE... THAT OF THE OTHER ASTRONAUT... SO THE
SECOND EVIL I SHALL ERASE MUST BE... *MYSELF*...



...FAREWELL...
FAREWELL...

GOODBYE, MACHU...
AND THANK YOU!



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A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net Press Run):

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E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D):

F. Office Use, Left-Over, Unsolicited, Spoiled After Printing:

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Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date
290,000	300,000
140,000	158,000
236	231
140,236	158,211
345	346
140,584	158,557
149,416	141,443
290,000	300,000

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. **BERNARD KASHDAN**, Business Manager.

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